

Septic Mound Plants

Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Comments
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	butterfly weed	2-3'	Native; showy orange flowers; butterfly favorite; prefers well-drained soil.
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	sideoats grama	1-2'	Tough grass for well-drained sites; native to central US.
<i>Bouteloua grama</i>	blue grama	6-18"	Tough grass for well-drained sites; native to central US.
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	purple coneflower	2-4'	Popular wildflowers with medicinal properties; large showy flowers in late summer.
<i>Festuca</i> spp.	fescue	3"-2'	Wiry; tough grass; 'Elijah Blue' is silvery blue.
<i>Geum triflorum</i>	prairie smoke	6-12'	Showy pink flowers; attractive foliage.
<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	oxeye, false sunflower	3-5'	Bright yellow flowers in summer; easy to grow; attracts aphids.
<i>Hemerocallis</i> spp.	daylily	1-3'	Plant several varieties for continuous bloom; require minimal care; tough plant.
<i>Liatris</i> spp.	blazing star, gayfeather	2-5'	Butterfly favorite; may need rabbit protection.
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	bergamot, bee balm	2-4'	Lovely pink to lavender flowers; subject to powdery mildew; mint family; can make tea from the leaves.
<i>Penstemon</i> spp.	penstemon, beardtongue	2-3'	Native wildflowers; a favorites of bees and hummingbirds.
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	little bluestem	2-4'	Clump forming grass; bronze and orange fall color.
<i>Sedum</i> spp.	sedum	6"-2'	Tough plant for dry sites; many forms and species.
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	prairie dropseed	2-3'	Native grass found on upland sites or sandy soils; cloud-like fragrant flowers; yellow-orange fall color.



Dry garden plants are perfect for a septic mound; dwarf blue fescue is shown here with sedum on either side and yucca in the background.

Septic mounds are difficult sites requiring minimal disturbance to keep the drainfield intact. Frequent working of the soil is not a good idea. Plants listed above have low maintenance and reduced water requirements. Their fibrous root system helps to hold the soil and prevent erosion off the mound. All are winter hardy in Zones 3 and 4.

Compiled by Tim Wedekind, Dakota County Master Gardener. Tim researched septic mound plantings for his weekly gardening columns for the Hastings Star Gazette. He recently "retired" from that Master Gardener volunteer role after writing 412 (8 years) of gardening columns.



Prairie dropseed, left unmowed, forms attractive mounds between a mowed walkway.